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Control: 2189
Rec'd: November 4, 1963
5:45 p.m.

FROM: Athens

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 689, November 4, 6 p.m.

PRIORITY

ACTION PRIORITY DEPARTMENT 689; INFORMATION PARIS 57, ROME 46, THESSALONIKI UNNUMBERED.

PARIS FOR BURNS AND JAMES.

ROME FOR BURRIS.

Subject: Greek Elections.

In analyzing basis for Center Union sharp gains at ERE expense (most noticeable in northern Greece, but also in central Greece) following emerge as major reasons influencing voter switch:

1. After low point of summer for Center Union, when Papandreou-Venizelos rift seemed almost beyond repair and Papandreou threatened to abstain from elections under Pipinelis government, marked improvement took place in Center Union's position, beginning in late September. Rift was patched up and Papandreou managed to have King accept Pipinelis' resignation. This gave strong shot in arm to CU; from thereon Papandreou waged buoyant "pie in sky" campaign with promised benefits for all. Confidence of party blossomed and grew.

2. ERE campaign, on contrary, never seemed to get off ground. Caramanlis' opening speech at Thessaloniki on October /6 was poorly

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6 was poorly received in country and by many in own party. Caramanlis' campaign from then on -- with exception of finale in Athens -- was lack-luster, studded with examples of his petulance and irascibility.

3. Palace, which had been strongly against Caramanlis in early summer but which later on had appeared to become reconciled to his return, reverted to earlier position toward end and maneuvered against him.

4. Changes in U.S. aid policies, which have never been fully accepted by Greeks, were cleverly exploited by Center press with steady drumming of theme that Caramanlis' government failed present Greek case with sufficient vigor.

[redacted]

5. "Time for a change;" eight years in office unusually long for any one Greek leader.

6. Wear and tear on ERE image of 24 months of "relentless struggle" which stressed theme that ERE was threatening "democracy". This was particularly stepped up after Lambrakis affair.

7. Various groups of Greek citizens, for example, certain farmers, teachers and labor were not really satisfied with their economic lot even though they are patently better off than several years ago. As more villagers became aware of progress in cities they became impatient with the slowness of their own economic advancement. Hard hitting Center press campaign on this theme kept these feelings aflame and also struck home with stress on taxation inequalities.

[redacted] Easing east-west

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8. Easing east-west situation robbed Caramanlis of "patriotic" issue which was so effectively exploited in 1961 campaign in wake of Khrushchev threat to bomb Acropolis and Bulgarian provocations.

[redacted]

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